



McGregor W. Scott
United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

NEWS RELEASE

Sacramento
501 I. Street, Ste 10-100
Sacramento CA 95814
Tel (916) 554-2700
TTY (916) 554-2855

Fresno
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401
Fresno, CA 93721
Tel (559) 497-4000
TTY (559) 497-4500

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Contact: Patty Pontello, 916-554-2706

www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae

**PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD NETS FOUR INDICTMENTS OF
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OFFENSES**

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney McGregor Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned four unrelated indictments involving charges related to the sexual exploitation of children. Among those indicted were MICHAEL O'CONNER, 48, of Rancho Cordova; RON SEAN ARTER, Jr., 27, of Redding; DEREK S. GODFREY, 37 of Rocklin and TROY L. CARDOSO, 37 of Sacramento.

These cases are the product of Project Safe Childhood (PSC). PSC is a United States Department of Justice initiative established to increase federal prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children and to reduce the incidences of Internet crimes against children including child pornography trafficking. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with state and local agencies to enhance law enforcement's presence on the Internet and to educate the public and children about safe Internet use, thereby reducing the chance children will fall prey to online sexual predators. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafefchildhood.gov or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

"The charges brought today underscore local, state, and federal law enforcement's resolve to target child exploitation throughout our region," stated United States Attorney Scott.

The two-count indictment against O'CONNER, prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Laurel White, alleges that he possessed child pornography between October 13, 2006 and January 11, 2007, and that he distributed such material on October 13, 2006. O'CONNER is currently in federal custody on charges filed earlier this month in a related federal criminal complaint. He is scheduled to be arraigned on January 30, 2007. This case was the product of an investigation by the Sacramento and Dallas, Texas offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The one-count indictment against ARTER, prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Camil Skipper, alleges that he possessed child pornography in May 2006. He is currently serving a state sentence for misdemeanor convictions of using a minor to manufacture obscene material and invasion of privacy. In 2002 ARTER was convicted in federal court in Sacramento for transporting and possessing child pornography. He is presently on federal supervised release. This case is the product of a joint investigation by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security and the Redding Police Department.

The indictments against GODFREY and CARDOSO, prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Heiko Coppola, were the product of a national child pornography investigation, code-named Operation Emissary, that began in New Jersey. The one-count indictment against GODFREY alleges that he possessed child pornography from October 2005 until October 2006. This case was investigated by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security. The one-count indictment against CARDOSO alleges that he possessed child pornography from October 2005 until August 2006. This case was investigated locally by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security and the Sacramento Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

The maximum penalty for distributing child pornography is 20 years imprisonment, with a 5-year minimum mandatory sentence. The maximum penalty for possessing child pornography is 10 years imprisonment. Each count carries a maximum fine of \$250,000 and a possible life term of supervised release. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

ARTER, however, faces a 10-year mandatory minimum sentence and up to 20 years imprisonment because of his prior conviction.

The charges are only allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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